

# Connecticut Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative (CYSPI) Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2007  
United Way  
Wethersfield, CT  
9:00 – 10:30 AM

In Attendance: Allison Case, DMHAS; Paloma Dee, NAMI; Andrea Duarte, DMHAS; Amy James, UCHC; Barbara Sheldon, CTBHP; Judith Stonger, CT Clearinghouse; Bill Turek, SDE

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## Website

Andrea reported that she has met with the DMHAS website designer and the Project website is active and will continue to be updated <http://www.dmhas.state.ct.us/prevention/suicideprevention/CYSPI.htm>. She provided a description of key features- headings and links and noted that the description of the training component is still very brief, and the St. Francis – Quirk Middle School pilot section is under construction. Andrea also solicited feedback from the group regarding content and the possible listing of advisory board member's names with contact information, links to collaborating agencies and organizations, meeting minutes and handouts-updates as well as current statistics. Judith expressed concern regarding providing member e-mail addresses as her agency has found that this increases significantly. A suggestion was made to provide links to agency websites. Barabara also suggested that the site might include information on membership and how to get involved. A discussion ensued as to whether the group is open to new members or should be limited as it is a sub-committee of CYSAB. It was determined that sub-contractors of the CYSPI may be included.

## Training Component

Andrea reported that the Initiative's initial plan was for DMHAS to contract with DCF, who would in turn subcontract with Wheeler and United Way-211. Deanna Lia, DCF was concerned about her availability to provide oversight due to time constraints and additional responsibilities, therefore, the revised plan is for DMHAS to contract directly with Wheeler and United Way-211. Andrea will provide oversight and consult regularly with DeAnna. Both Wheeler and United Way-211 will receive \$15,000 annually for three years to provide trainings. Andrea is currently writing new contracts to reflect these changes.

Susan Walkama at Wheeler attended SPRC/AAS training in Ohio and is in the process of being certified to teach *Assessing & Managing Suicide Risk: Core Competencies for Mental Health Professionals*. As part of her training, she is holding a practice presentation/session at Wheeler on Friday, 2/24. Andrea, Amy, and Judith will be in attendance.

Andrea reported that Susan Moores from United Way-211 will be attending Living Works/ASIST Training for Trainers (T4T) in New York beginning on 3/19. It is expected that Susan will then be able to provide the "Community 202" – 2-day training workshop for trainers and facilitate development of a network of trainers statewide.

## Hartford Pilot

Andrea and Amy recently met with Dr. Schichor, Stephen King, Mary Stuart, and Bruce Bernstein of St. Francis and Jenny Duncan-Rojano of Hartford Public Schools. They are still looking to hire a bilingual, Masters-level clinician at each site. Amy reported that the sites are planning to use the Beck II (13 y.o.

and up) and will initially try the more sensitive Reynolds (good for 11 & 12 y.o). The hospital and school will have weekly case reviews once services begin. Andrea reported that Hartford Schools will utilize St. Francis' consent form and DMHAS will assist with Spanish translation acquisition. A data agreement is being developed between the hospital and the school as an addendum to their contract in order to address protocols and procedures.

Andrea reported that she and Amy are trying to incorporate ORC Macro's cross-site evaluation the screening forms, and state-level data collection into one on-line database. The ORC Macro Early Identification, Referral and Follow-up (EIRF) and Training Exit Survey (TES) were passed around for subcommittee to review.

Per Andrea ORC Macro is hoping to approve all tools by March 2007; tools cannot be used prior to then. Connecticut may want to adapt the TES and Andrea will meet with Wheeler and United Way-211 to discuss.

Amy further reported that one of ORC Macro's goals is to track kids after evaluation, at 6-8 sessions or weeks and then at 6-month intervals for the life of the project to determine whether referrals are followed through. As UHC will receive de-identified data, an acrostic (combination of numbers and letters including portions of student last and first names and birth month and day) will be used.

#### High School Component

Collaboration with the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) is moving along swiftly. Andrea and Amy successfully met with Bill Turek, Scott Newgass, and Anne Druzolowski, Asst. Superintendent responsible for curriculum oversight on 1/19. A Memorandum of Agreement is in draft form in the DMHAS' Fiscal Unit. A map identifying locations of 17 technical high schools statewide and recent youth suicides was passed around for subcommittee review. (Bill had a correction – Wolcott Tech is in Torrington, not Wolcott). Andrea reported that the CTHSS serves the entire state so all areas that have experienced suicides will receive attention. Student participation will require active parental consent and student assent. The SOS Curriculum will be available at each school for parent review as requested. Bill also reported that counselors, psychologists and social workers are (excited and) ready to act as school liaisons. Finally, Amy reported that all CTHSS schools would receive the intervention and a wait-list control design will be utilized; the evaluation will include a pre-test. UHC's IRB has asked that a few items be removed from the consent forms. As previously discussed, consent forms will need to be translated into Polish. No changes with Meriden or Hartford Public Schools.

#### College Component

Andrea reported that the Connecticut State University (CSU) system prefers a single contract to four individual. The language is a little tricky as one pair of schools (Southern and Western) will phase-in programs a year ahead of a second pair (Central and Eastern). Andrea is hoping to finalize this contract soon.

#### Evaluation

Amy reported that the next step is getting the project's college component through UHC's IRB. Also to be worked out/addressed is ORC Macro's EIRF in the Hartford Pilot. It would also be desirable to collect the EIRF in CTHSS. Andrea indicated that this is not required and is a decision for CTHSS to consider. Bill said he will review the EIRF and get back to Andrea about his decision.

#### Statewide Community Campaign

Andrea discussed draft Prevention Education and Awareness Campaign. The campaign is grounded in the use of the community youth development model, and may support a range of activities. There is approximately \$12,500 over two years to support this effort, and DeAnna Lia

previously informed Andrea that DCF may be able to contribute as well. One possible activity is hosting, attending or supporting an “Out of the Darkness Community Walk” to benefit the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

Andrea shared that in a prior conversation with DeAnna, DeAnna expressed some concern about providing dollars to conduct fund-raising events for another organization. Paloma Dee (NAMI) indicated that when they sponsor events, as a general rule, 60% of funds raised stay at the local affiliate and 40% are allocated to NAMI-CT. Bill asked about what comes back to either the community or to Connecticut for donation to AFSP. Amy asked about support for a memorial tree planting and ceremony. Andrea did not feel this was appropriate and stressed the intent is to focus on prevention. A general discussion on appropriate use of funds ensued, including an inquiry from Judy about possible funding of a media or marketing campaign. The consensus of the subcommittee was that these funds should go to schools or communities with pre-existing youth groups.

Allison inquired about the timeline for this aspect of the project. (Year 2) Andrea reported that this aspect of the Project would be managed by the CT Clearinghouse via a Personal Service Agreement/Contract with DMHAS and DCF if funds are available. It is expected that an RFP will be developed and distributed in April with decisions on awards going out by the end of the current school year. Funds would be distributed in late summer in order for implementation to occur during the 2007-2008 academic year.

#### Other

Bill suggested that publicity of the media campaign may be increased via radio spots on WRCH, NPR, and/or other local/school radio stations.

#### AAS Conference

Andrea reported that she would be attending the American Association of Suicidology conference April 11-14 in New Orleans. Rob Aseltine from UCHC will be presenting on at the conference on the relationship between suicidality and alcohol use, especially when youth are drinking to self-medicate or drinking while depressed.

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Handouts: Website Home Page; CYSPI Frequently Asked Questions; Assessing & Managing Suicide Risks (AMSR) Core Competencies for Mental Health Professionals one-day workshop description; ASIST Training for Trainers (T4T) five-day course for resource personnel description; DRAFT Prevention Education and Awareness Campaign description; January 16 Meeting Minutes.